Tricky Peik
and Other Picture Tales

Selected by Jeanne B. Hardendorff

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trated by Tomie de Paola

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Jeanne B. Hardendorff

Illustrated by Tomie de Paola

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and Other

PICTURE TALES

J. B. Lippincott Company

PHILADELPHIA *and* NEW YORK

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TO

Eric deGraffenreid Hardendorff,

listener *par excellence*

Contents

Foreword	9
Tricky Peik	11
The Three Hunters	23
The Cat and the Mice	27
The Fortunate Shoemaker	33
The Oyster and the Heron	41
The Arabe Duck	45
The Farmer and the Hoe	51
The Coyote and the Two Dogs	55
Clever—Clever—Clever	63
The Fox and the Cock	71
Giacco and His Bean	75
The Crafty Servant	81
Donkeys! Dogs! Cats! Rats!	87
The Wise Priest	93
The Servant and the Door	97
The Stupid Fellow	101
The Donkey in the Lion-Skin	109
Per and the North Wind	111
Donkey's Eggs	119
Why Cats Always Wash After Eating	121

Foreword

THE TIME HAS ALMOST COME when the rectangular volumes so easily identified as being one of the *Picture Tales from Holland*, *France*, *Italy*, and so on, are to be found no more on library shelves or in book stores.

For the storyteller to have unavailable this rich source would mean the loss of many tales so right, so apt to use in story hours for children.

For the children it would mean a double loss; they would not be hearing the tales told and they would not have the opportunity to read for themselves these tales from the different countries and cultures.

It was a pleasure to go through the different *Picture Tales* to choose stories to include in this collection. So once again for the storyteller and the children here is that terrible rogue Peik; the literal-minded servant of the goldsmith; the in-

genious twin mice Brother Here and Brother There; Giacco with his ill-fated bean, as well as others too numerous to mention here.

JEANNE B. HARDENDORFF

Tricky Peik

PEIK AND HIS SISTER were twins who looked very much alike, but they were quite different in all of their thoughts and habits. The girl was quiet and industrious, while her brother was a gay fellow who spent his time playing pranks.

His sister often urged Peik to take life a little more seriously, and when their parents died she said: "Now you cannot play about any longer! All of our money will soon be spent. What will we do when it is quite gone?"

"You will see. When we need money I will get it," answered Peik. "It is better to work with one's brain than with one's hands."

When the last of their money had been spent, Peik set out on the road which leads to the King's castle. The King chanced to be walking in the gardens and he called to Peik: "Where are you going, my boy?"

"I am looking for someone who will give me money in exchange for tricks," answered Peik.

"Will you show me what you can do?" laughed the King.

"No, Your Majesty, I cannot do my tricks now because I have forgotten and left my trick-sticks at home," replied Peik.

"Go home and get your trick-sticks," the King said. "I would like to see whether your tricks are really worth money."

"I am tired," Peik said, "and I cannot walk so far."

"Well, you can take my horse and saddle," the King said.

"But I cannot ride a horse," said Peik.

"O, we will help you onto the horse and then you can hang on somehow," said the King.

After much urging, Peik agreed to ride the horse, and they brought it from the royal stable and lifted Peik up until he sat in the saddle.

Peik was such a funny sight, holding awkwardly to the horse's mane that the King laughed until he had tears in his eyes. When Peik reached the forest where the King could no longer see him, he rode to town as fast as he could and sold the horse and saddle.

The King expected to see Peik come back,

hanging onto the horse's mane and carrying his trick-sticks, and he laughed every time he thought of the funny fellow on the horse. But Peik did not come back.

At last the King decided that he himself had been tricked out of his horse, and he was very angry. "I will find this worthless fellow, and put an end to his tricks and his life at the same time," said the King, and he started off to find Peik and punish him.

Peik knew quite well that the King would be coming, and he said to his sister, "Take the big pot and set some porridge to cooking." Just before the King came to the house Peik took the boiling pot from the fire and put it on the stump of a tree, where it went on steaming and bubbling for a while.

The King was so surprised when he saw the porridge cooking without any fire under the pot, that he forgot he had come to punish Peik for tricking him out of his horse. "This is a wonderful pot which cooks without a fire," he thought. "I would gladly buy it if, by chance, Peik is willing to part with it."

So, the King said to him: "I will give you a purse full of gold for the pot. You tricked me

out of my horse, and you, therefore, owe me something. Let me buy the pot."

The King had to talk a while before Peik agreed to take the purse full of gold, but finally the bargain was made and the King carried the pot back to the castle with him.

He sent out invitations far and wide for folks to come and see him cook in his wonderful new pot which needed no fire under it. When the company had gathered, the King placed the pot in the middle of the floor and told it to start cooking. Everyone thought this was a joke of the King's. They did not understand it but they laughed all the same. Then the King said impatiently: "Just wait a moment—the pot will soon begin to cook!" They waited and waited, but the pot did not even get warm. Then the King was really angry and cried: "I am sure that Peik has tricked me again. This time I will find him and he will not escape!"

When he came to Peik's house, the King cried: "You have now tricked me twice and I have come to kill you!" And the King took out his knife. Peik looked surprised, and he asked: "Can it be that the pot is not cooking as it should?"

"It is not cooking at all," shouted the King.

"That must be because you did not have the stump which goes with it," said Peik. "Of course the pot will not cook unless it stands on the stump."

"That is reasonable," said the King. "Let me have the stump and I will give you three hundred gold pieces."

"One must never overcharge," said Peik. "It is not worth more than two hundred!" and he took the gold pieces while the King took the stump and both were well pleased.

Invitations were again quickly sent to the King's friends, and when they had gathered he placed the pot on the stump and said: "Now you shall see how to cook without fire. The pot will soon begin to cook for now I have the stump that goes with it."

Everyone waited and this time no one laughed. Of course nothing happened, and the King was even more angry than before. "I will certainly put an end to this fellow and his tricks," he said, starting off in the direction of Peik's house.

But he did not take Peik by surprise. The boy felt sure that the King would be coming back, so he quickly killed a goat and filled a

sack with the blood, and told his sister to hide the sack inside her blouse.

Soon the King came up shouting: "Where is Peik? He shall pay for his tricks now!"

Peik's sister said: "The boy has been out working all day. He is so tired that he has dropped down on his bed and fallen asleep."

"Make haste and waken him," cried the King.

"I dare not," the girl protested. "It puts Peik in a terrible rage when anyone disturbs his rest."

"That makes no difference to me," shouted the King in an angry tone. "I will go and wake him myself," and he took out his knife as he spoke.

"There will surely be trouble now," thought the girl. "Perhaps I had better go and wake him after all," she said.

When she leaned over to waken him, Peik took his knife and pricked the sack of blood, so that it gushed out as if his sister's very life was pouring out of her. The poor girl herself fainted from fright and lay quite still and white.

"What is this you have done!" the King cried. "You have killed your sister before my eyes."

"O, that is not so serious," answered Peik.

"Only wait a moment," and he took down from the wall a big ram's horn. He put this against his sister's side and blew it. The girl opened her eyes and jumped up from the bed, for the sack had emptied itself of blood and the girl had got over her fright.

"What do I see!" the King exclaimed. "Do you kill people and then bring them back to life by blowing a horn!"

"I am so hot-tempered that I often act hastily," replied Peik. "But I can always wake people up again with my horn."

"I have a hot temper, too," said the King. "You must let me have the horn, for I am often in need of its services. I will forgive you the tricks which you played with my horse and the pot and the stump. I will give you a bag of money besides, if you will only let me have that ram's horn." But it was only after much urging that Peik let the King have it.

When the King went home he wanted to try the horn at once and so he trumped up a quarrel with the Queen and his older daughter, and then he took out his knife and killed them both. Everyone in the castle was frightened when they saw what the King had done, but the King only laughed and said: "It is not really

serious." Placing the horn against the Queen's side he began to blow, and he blew and blew until his face was quite red.

He blew all one day and night and all the next day, and everyone in the castle took turns blowing, but they could not waken the Queen and the Princess.

And now the King said: "This is indeed too much to bear. I see that instead of stopping to listen to Peik I should have killed him at once," and he set out for Peik's house.

Peik was expecting a visit from the King, so he asked his sister to change clothes with him and then to go and hide in the wood. Peik, in his sister's clothes, was sitting on the door-step when the King at last came.

"Where is Peik?" asked the King.

"O, he has left home," Peik said, sitting there in his sister's clothes.

"If he had been here I would surely have killed him," said the King. "He is such a rascal that I would not have spared his life a day longer."

"He knew that you would kill him, and so he went away," said Peik. "And he has left me without food or money."

"There is no reason for you to starve just

because you have a bad brother," said the King. "Come with me and I will see that you have good care."

So the King took Peik with him, and Peik had a very good time at the castle. "You are like a daughter to me," the King told him.

After a while a young Prince came to the castle looking for a wife, and when he saw Peik he said: "I need look no farther!" And the King said: "The dear girl will have a good husband," and began arranging a big wedding.

Peik was really frightened now and he ran away as quickly as he could to his home and got his own clothes again. Everyone was searching for the runaway bride, even the King, and as he was riding along he spied Peik perched on a stone playing a flute.

"What are you doing sitting there?" said the King. "You know you must come home with me now and be killed."

So he took Peik along with him, and when they reached the castle he said to Peik, "You will be put into a barrel and left on top of a mountain for three days. Then you and the barrel will be rolled down the mountain and into the lake."

But Peik did not seem to mind being packed into the barrel. He sang and he whistled there in his barrel on the mountaintop. A very old and rich man passed by and heard Peik singing, "Up to Paradise I will go! Up to Paradise I will go!"

"I wish I was sure I could get there!" said the old man. "Do you think I could get to Paradise if I took your place in the barrel?"

"Perhaps you could," said Peik. "But it means a good deal to me to give up my own chance." Finally the rich man said that he would give Peik all of his wealth if he would let him take his place, and he helped Peik out of the barrel and got in himself.

At the end of three days, the King came, and thinking that Peik was still inside the barrel, said: "Now, down into the water you go and there will be an end to your tricks," and he gave the barrel a mighty push, and the rich man rolled into the lake. It is hoped that he went to Paradise, where he wished to be.

When the King returned home he saw Peik sitting in front of the castle playing on his flute. "Can it be that you are alive when I have only come from rolling you into the lake in a barrel!"

"I am very much alive," answered Peik. "Indeed, I am thinking of hiring your castle to store all my money in."

"But where have you found all this money?" asked the King.

"In the lake," Peik replied. "It is lucky for me that you rolled me in. Down at the bottom I found gold and silver and horses and cows and goats. Now I must find a place where I can keep all of my riches."

"What will you charge to roll me down the mountain into the lake?" asked the King.

"You need not pay me for that," said Peik. "I will gladly do it for nothing."

So Peik put the King into a barrel and rolled him to the top of the mountain. Then he pushed the barrel down into the lake.

Then Peik saw that someone would surely be needed to rule over the land, and so he went to the castle and did all that was expected of him. And, if he ever used his trick-sticks again, no one found out about it.

Picture Tales from Scandinavia, Selected and Retold by Ruth Bryan Owen.

The Three Hunters

ONCE THERE WERE THREE HUNTERS; two were not dressed and the other had no clothes on.

And they had three guns; two were not loaded, and the other one was empty.

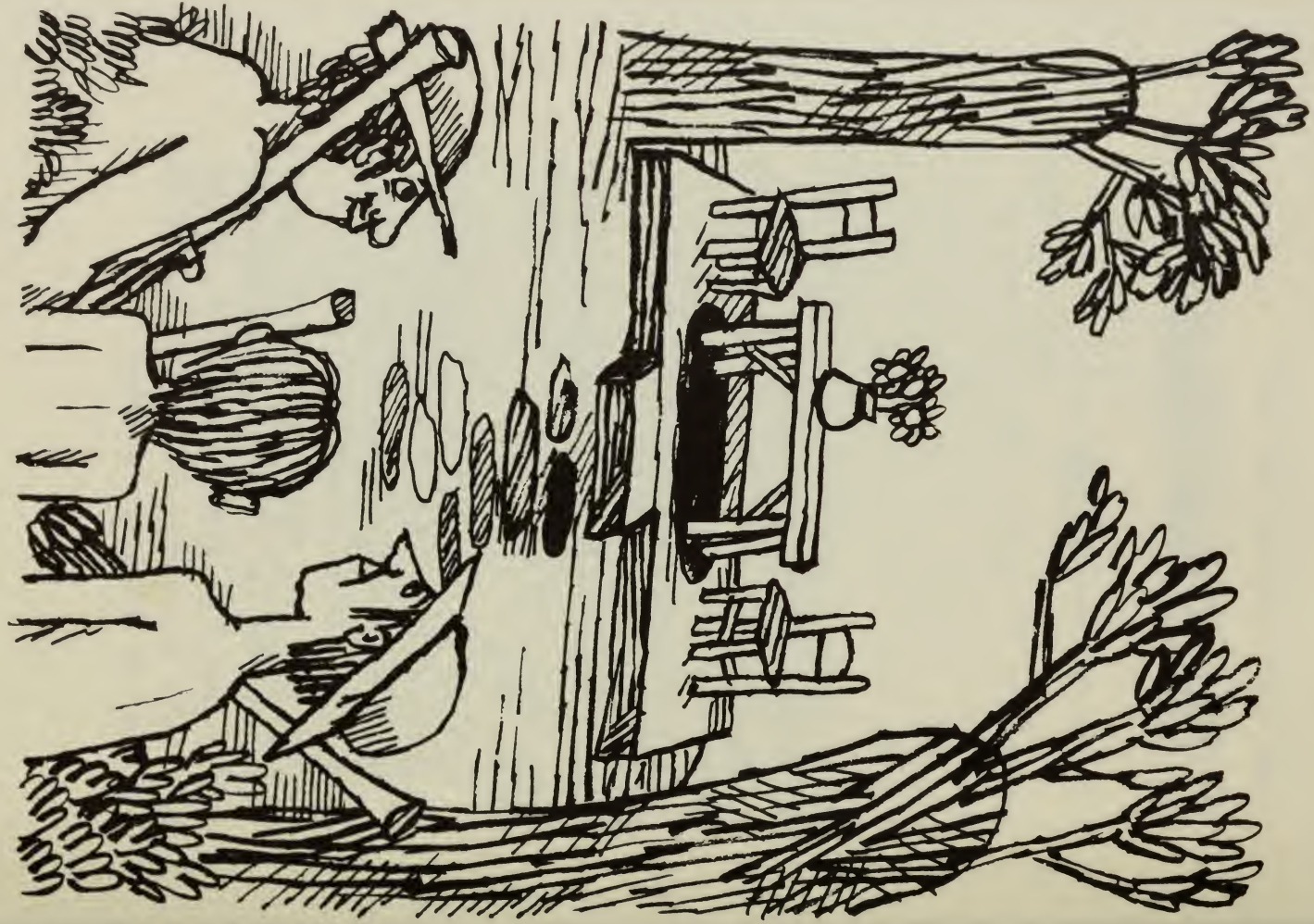
They left before daybreak and went far, far away—even farther than that.

Near a wood, they shot at three hares—bang! bang! bang! and missed two, while the third one ran away.

They put the two hares they had missed in the pocket of the hunter who had no clothes on.

"Goodness gracious!" they exclaimed. "How shall we ever cook the hare that ran away?"

Then the three hunters started off again. They went far, far away—but this time much farther than they hadn't gone before. At last they came to a house that had neither walls nor roof, nor doors, nor windows.



The three hunters rapped three times on the missing door, knock! knock! knock!

One who wasn't there answered: "What is it? What do you want?"

"Please do us a favor. Lend us your skillet to cook the hare that got away from us."

"Dearie me! gentlemen, we have only three skillets in the house, and two are broken and the third isn't any good!"

So the hunters sat down on the doorstep that wasn't there, to decide what to do about it. And while they are thinking, let's finish this tale, as all stories must have an end.

Picture Tales from the French by Simone Chamoud.

The Cat and the Mice

HERE AND THERE were twin mice who first opened their eyes in a great farmhouse. They were playful young creatures, but they seldom dared to play. They were afraid of a big black cat with blazing eyes and claws like swords. That fearful creature was always snooping about on velvet paws ready to pounce down upon them.

One day the cat found a string of brown beads. They were the rosary of a monk who had lost them. The cat saw the twin mice watching her, so she put the rosary over her head.

Here and There were amazed at this strange sight and drew closer to watch her. This gave the cat an idea.

She called a meeting of the mice and said, "I have been to the temple beside the lotus pool. After gazing long at the Golden Buddha I have decided to devote my life to prayer. I shall catch

no more mice. From this day onward, you need have no fear of me."

The mice were very happy and cried, "Buddha's blessings on the Holy Cat! Buddha's blessings on the Holy Cat!"

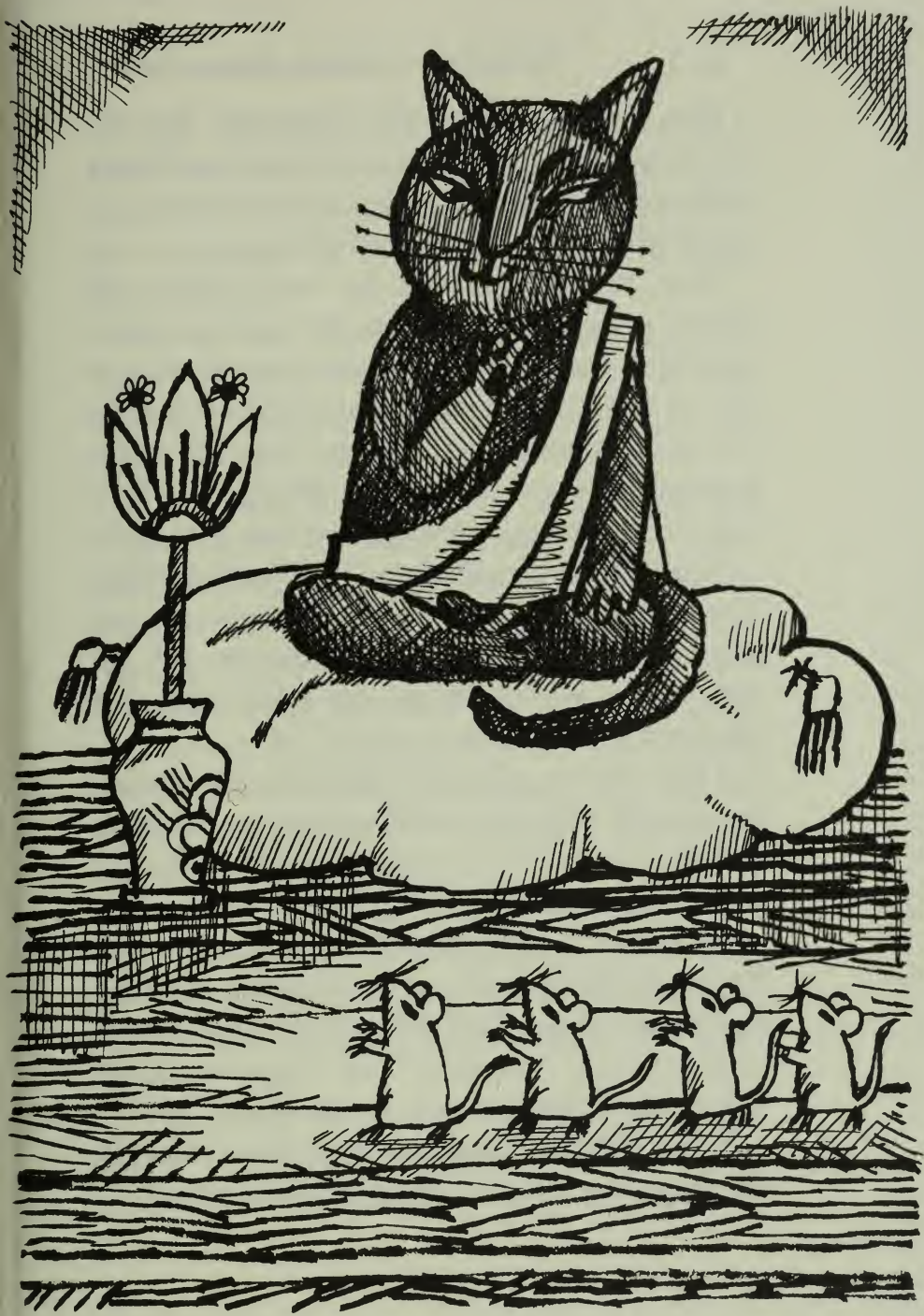
Then the cat added, "This is all that I ask of you. Twice each day you must all file past me and bow to show that you are grateful."

"We are grateful, Holy Cat! We are grateful!" cried all the mice.

The next day the cat seated herself upon a red satin cushion and tried to look like a Buddha. She folded her back legs in front of her and held up her right forepaw. She lowered her eyelids and tried to imitate the inward smile of the Buddha.

The long line of mice curved its way over the farmhouse floor. Each mouse, in turn, knelt before the cat and cried, "I put my trust in the Holy Cat! I put my trust in the Holy Cat!"

While the last mouse was bowing low before her, the cat's right forepaw darted down. She seized and killed the little creature so quickly that it did not make a sound. So the other mice never suspected that one of them was gone. And the cat was much pleased with her own cleverness.



Day after day went by. And each day the cat received the morning and evening thanks of the mice. And every day that old black cat repaid them by seizing the last mouse.

Now, it happened that the twins, Here and There, noticed that the cat was getting fatter and fatter every day. They also noticed that as the cat grew fatter and fatter, their own number grew smaller and smaller. One afternoon Brother Here said, "Brother There, I believe that old black cat is not playing fair with us."

"I believe so too, Brother Here," said Brother There. "Let's find out. Brother Here, you go first in the thank-you parade tonight. I'll go last. In this way we'll find out what trick that old black cat is playing on us."

That evening Brother Here led the thank-you parade. He kept calling back in his high squeaky voice, "Are you there, Brother There?"

"I am here, Brother Here!" came the answer.

Back and forth went question and answer as the long line of mice curved its way over the farmhouse floor. Each mouse, in turn, knelt before the cat and cried, "I put my trust in the Holy Cat! I put my trust in the Holy Cat!"

Now, Brother There was the last mouse in the thank-you parade. As he kept answering, "I

am here, Brother Here," the cat did not dare to seize him. So she had to go without her supper that night. She was hungry and angry, but she felt sure that she would have two mice to eat the next day.

But in the morning as the long queue of mice filed past her, Brother Here again kept calling in his high squeaky voice, "Are you there, Brother There?"

"I am here, Brother Here!" replied Brother There. Again the question and answer went back and forth, back and forth. For the second time, the old black cat had to miss a meal. She was hungrier and angrier than ever. But when the same thing happened the third time, she was furious. She sprang off the red satin cushion and pounced down upon a mouse. But they had all been warned by the twins, Here and There, and ran away and hid.

From their hiding places Here and There peeped out at the old black cat. "So you devote your life to prayer, do you?" cried Brother Here.

"And you won't catch any more mice?" cried Brother There.

"A fine holy cat you are!" cried an old grandmother with white whiskers.

The cat arched her back, showed her teeth,

and sprang around the room like an angry whirlwind. But she had been lazy for so long that she could not catch a single mouse.

At last she leaped out of the door and into the night. She stared up at the moon. After much thought she said to herself, "Those twins, Here and There, are too smart for me. How can I ever show my face in that farmhouse again? I will just have to leave and try my tricks elsewhere." She spat angrily. Then she walked slowly to the village to find herself a new home.

And after that there was peace and happiness in the home of the twin mice, Here and There.

Picture Tales from the Chinese by Berta Metzger.

The Fortunate Shoemaker

THERE ONCE LIVED in the village of Oosterlittens, in the Province of Frisia, a shoemaker who labored hard and long every day of the week, except Sunday. But hard as he might work, he could not earn enough to lay something aside for a rainy day. That did not worry the shoemaker greatly, as he was a daydreamer and often, as he toiled at his cobbler's bench, he dreamed of riches that would come to him sooner or later.

His wife always laughed at him when he told her about these golden dreams.

But one morning when he woke up, the shoemaker said breathlessly:

"Wife, wife, do you know what I dreamed

last night? Well, in my dream some one came to me and said, '*Baas Schoenmaker*, go to the Papenbrug in Amsterdam and you will find fortune there.' "

"Stuff and nonsense!" frowned his wife. "You'd better forget your silly dream and mend the Dominie's shoes instead—he is coming for them this morning. Remember the saying, '*Droomen zyn bedrog.*' " (Dreams are deceiving.)

The poor shoemaker held his tongue and shuffled to his bench, where he was soon busy patching the Dominie's shoes.

The next night he had the same dream and told his wife about it in the morning.

"Of course," remarked the wife, "since you thought of nothing else yesterday, it is no wonder you dreamed of that fortune again!"

But the third morning the shoemaker said, "Wife, this night I again had the same dream, and no matter *what* you say, I am going to Amsterdam!"

When the wife saw that her husband had set his heart on going, she decided to let him have his way for once, and bidding him a fond farewell and a speedy return, packed him off to Amsterdam.

It was a long and tiresome journey for the timid old man, and more than once he regretted having left his little village. But, alas, he was on a boat, and there was no turning back.

When the boat reached Amsterdam, the shoemaker went straight to the bridge he had dreamed of and stood hopefully in the middle, waiting for something to take place. But all that happened to him was that he was rudely pushed aside by the busy burghers of Amsterdam, because he was in their way, and more than once barely escaped being kicked by some donkey pulling a cart laden with butter and cheese, on the way to the market.

Alas, the Papenbrug seemed to be just an ordinary bridge, after all, and he had seen enough bridges in his own Frisia! At last, very much disappointed, he walked away and took a stroll around the town. But the sights did not interest him, and time and time again he returned to the bridge to look anxiously about.

When dusk had settled over the city he decided to go there once more before boarding the boat that was to carry him home. As he was leaning wearily over the railing of the bridge, a dirty ragged old beggar came up to him and said:

"Pardon me, my friend, but I could not help noticing that you have been here several times today. If you are looking for something, perhaps I can be of service, for I know this spot well."

The shoemaker looked at the beggar and sadly shook his head. "I am indeed searching for something," he told him, "but I am afraid that you won't be able to help me very much. Back in my village for three nights I dreamed that if I went to the Papenbrug in Amsterdam I would find my fortune."

The beggar looked at him in amazement, then burst out laughing.

"Ha, ha! Ho, ho! Excuse me for laughing, but you must be very simple indeed to believe in dreams. Now, take myself, *I* don't believe in them. Why, if I did, I'd be off on a wild-goose chase, too, for I have dreamed many times that if I went to the village of Oosterlittens in Frisia, I would find a pot filled with money in the garden of the shoemaker who lives opposite the church. But I'm not foolish enough to believe *that*. No, siree!" And sticking out his chest, the beggar walked away, chuckling to himself.

The shoemaker grew weak with excitement when he heard the beggar describe his very own house and garden, and lost no time in catching

his boat. When they crossed the Zuyder Zee he was very seasick, but he kept up his courage by reminding himself of the wealth in store for him.

It was night when he arrived home, and brushing aside his wife's questions, he seized a spade and soon had the dirt in the garden flying in all directions. His wife thought he had lost his senses, but changed her mind when her husband dug up an iron pot, filled to the top with money.

The shoemaker quickly covered up the hole he had made, and they counted the money and found that though they were not rich, they would now be able to buy many things they had had to do without all their lives. And after the pot had been scoured well, the thrifty wife had a new kettle besides!

One chilly day the Dominie came over to pay the shoemaker a visit and, as he was sitting near the fire, toasting his toes, he looked at the iron pot hanging on a chain in the chimney-place, and remarked, "Why, *Baas*, where did you get that pot?"

"Oh," explained the shoemaker, "I bought that from a traveling tinker not long ago. There

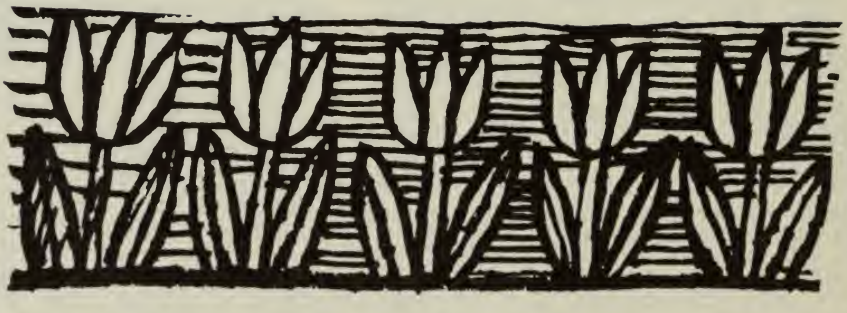
is writing on it, but it is in a foreign language and I cannot read what it says."

"Well, I can *read* it all right," answered the Dominie, "but it doesn't make sense; it says, 'Underneath me lies a still bigger pot.' "

From that moment the shoemaker was on pins and needles, wishing the Dominie would hurry and leave. When the Dominie finally did go, the cobbler rushed to the garden and began digging down deeper into the same hole he had made before. A few hours later his spade clanked against something hard, and he pulled to the top another pot, also full of money.

This time the shoemaker decided that he and his wife could take it easy for the rest of their lives, and shutting up the shop, they left for Amsterdam, where they became the richest burghers in the city. And it was only natural that the cobbler provided for the beggar who had unknowingly helped him find his fortune, for the remainder of his days.

Picture Tales from Holland by Johan Hart.



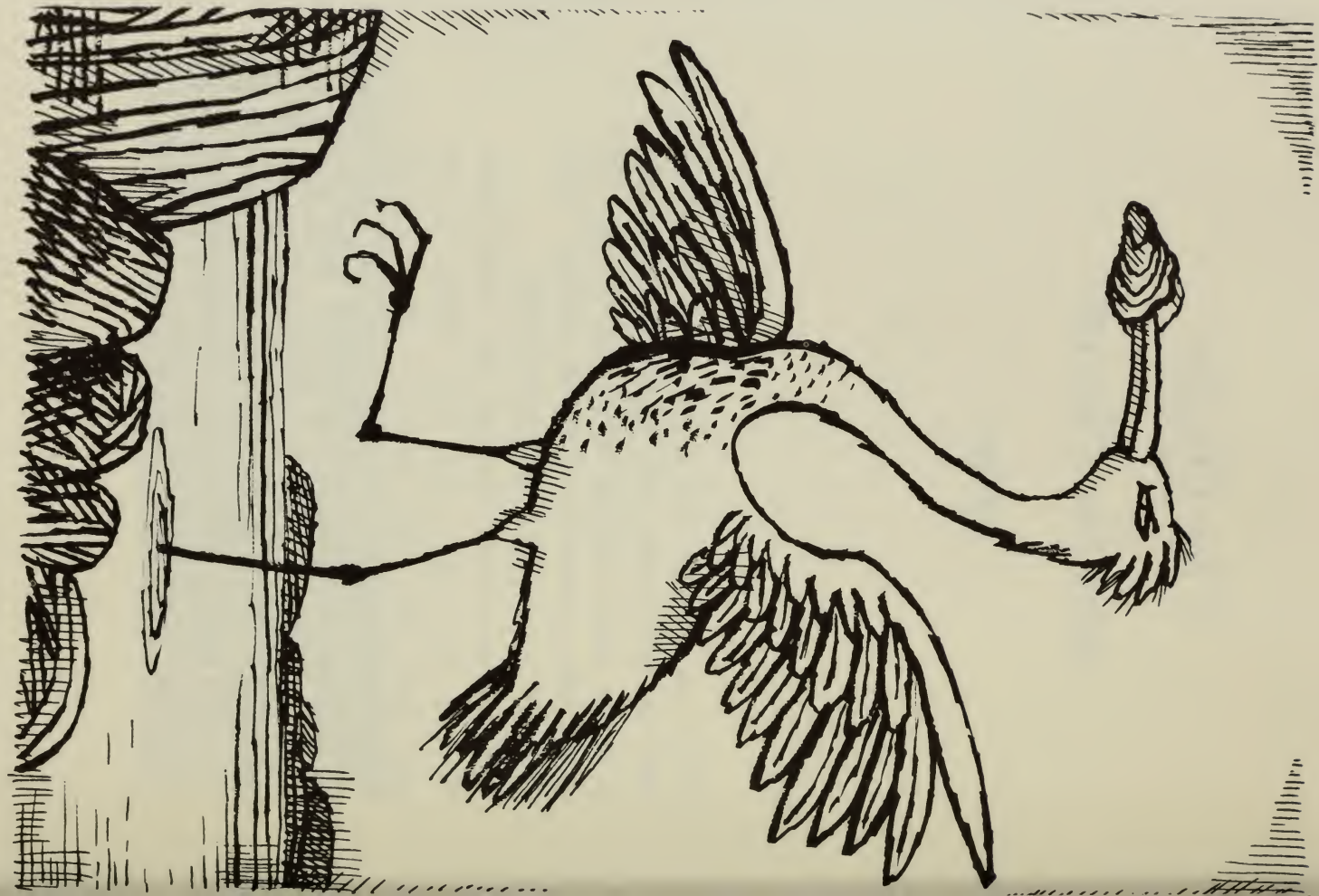
The Oyster and the Heron

Once an oyster was lying upon the shore with his shell open, and enjoying a sunbath. A heron came stalking along and thought he would take a mouthful of oyster. "Snap!" went the shell and caught the heron's beak.

The heron hissed through his closed beak, "If you don't open your shell today, if you don't open your shell tomorrow, there will be a dead oyster."

The oyster hissed, "If you don't take your beak out today, if you don't take your beak out tomorrow, there will be a dead heron."

In the meantime a fisherman came walking along the shore. The oyster and heron were



so busy quarreling with one another that they did not see this greater danger. And with no trouble at all, the fisherman caught them both.

Picture Tales from the Chinese by Berta Metzger.

The Arabe Duck

WELL, THEN—ONCE THERE WAS a duck who thought himself very wise and very important.

He came into Spain with the Arabs, which was a long time ago. That is why he was called the *Arabe* duck.

He settled in Valencia because he found many waterways there. There were ponds—big ones, small ones, and ones in between. He picked out one for himself that was in between and said: "No other duck shall live here, so there will always be plenty for me to eat."

The *Arabe* duck fared well. Fish abounded. All he had to do was to go in for them, head down, tail up. "They are stupid, those fish. It is a fine thing to be wise and clever as I am." That *Arabe* duck was a boaster.

No one shared the pond with him but the fishes, a few silly snails, and an old crab. How

long the crab had been there, nobody knew. He was slow and stupid and minded his own business. He never disputed with the *Arabe* duck who owned the pond; so they got on splendidly together.

In time the duck grew old, less agile, more boastful. He tried to dive and prune his feathers and dart across the water with his customary vigor; but he only did it when the crab was about, to notice him. He had a hard time catching fish enough to satisfy his hunger. He would dive for them and they would be gone before he could get them. His dinners grew scantier, farther apart. One night he went to his bed in the rushes, hungry.

That night he was afraid—afraid. "I must use my wits," he said aloud to himself. "There must be some way to catch those fish without working so hard. And one grows always older—never younger."

By another springtime the *Arabe* duck had grown gaunt—tottering; not so much from age as for the want of a good meal. Often he thought: "A thousand molestations on those fish! The younger generations are quicker, less stupid than the old. I must think up a scheme of catching them off their guard."

At last he had an idea—excellent—stupendous! He said to the crab: "Señor Crab, I am wise. I can read the stars."

"Can you, really!" said the crab. "I didn't know the stars could write anything down for anybody to read."

"Don't talk nonsense," said the *Arabe* duck. "What I mean is quite different." He didn't explain why it was different, because he didn't know. But he had heard the Arabian astrologers talk about reading the stars and it sounded very wise and important. "Perhaps," he went on, "you would like to know what I have read."

"I would," said the crab, "if it's interesting."

"It is and it concerns all of us."

"What do you mean by 'all of us'?"

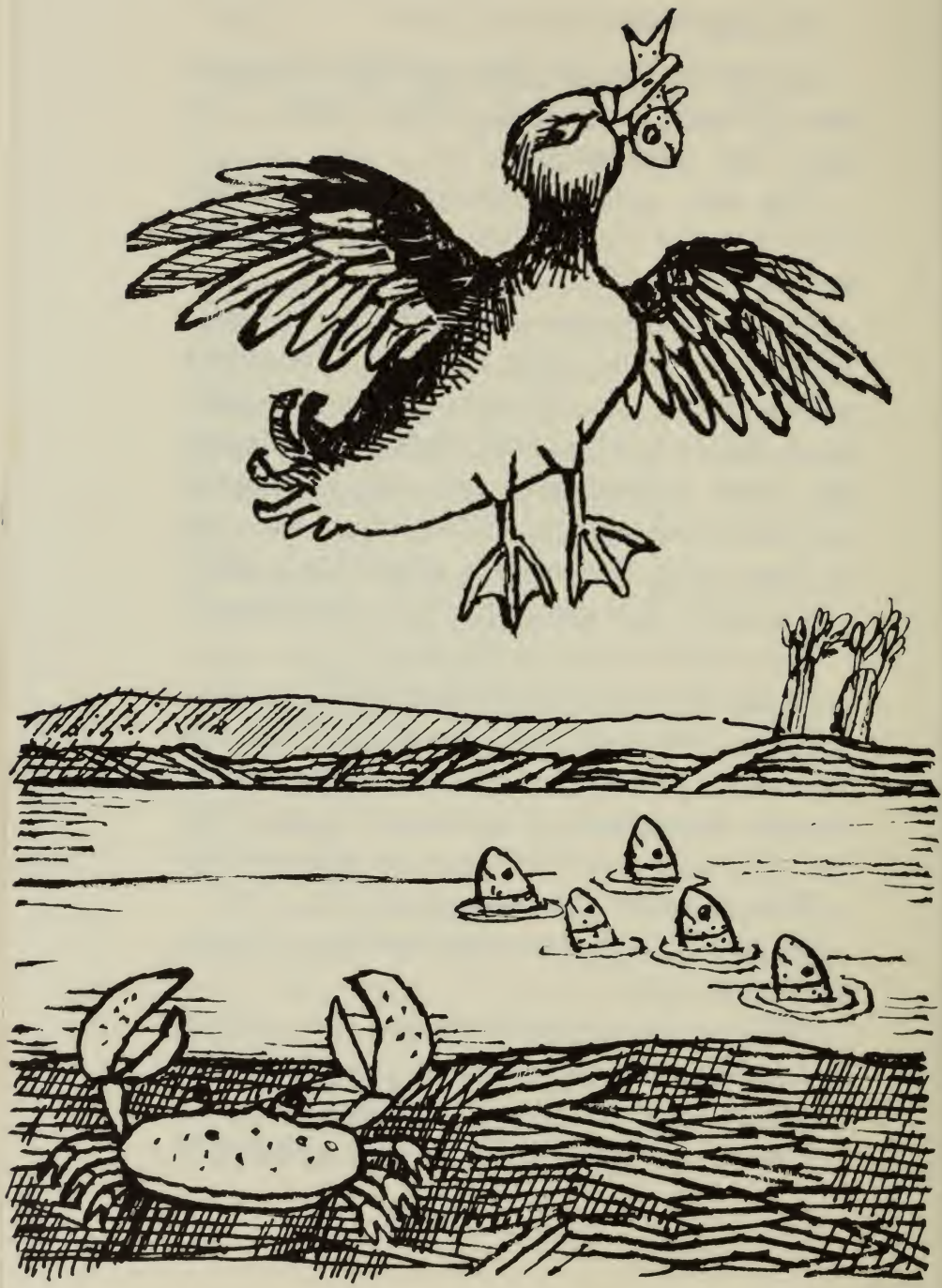
"Why, you, me, and the fishes. You see, there is to be a great drought. There will be no rain. Everything is going to dry up. Only the big ponds—the very big ones will remain."

"*Que lástima!* That sounds bad."

"It will be unless we find quickly a bigger pond to live in."

"That is all very well for you. You walk—you fly. You can go wherever you please. But I have to stay here; so do the fishes."

"Not at all," said the *Arabe* duck, putting on



a look of great benevolence. "I will carry you all. You go and tell the fish to swim close to the shore where I can pick them up quite easily. One by one I will take them across the *vega* to the first big pond, where they will be quite safe—oh, very safe."

So the crab told the fishes. After that every day was a feastday for the *Arabe* duck. All he had to do was to wade in from the beach; and the fish came swimming straight for his open bill. So afraid they were of being caught by the drought. The *Arabe* duck would handle them, each one, so gently; carry them beyond sight of the pond, gulp them down and come back for more. He grew fat and important again.

Now, the crab was stupid; but he had eyes at the back of his head. He saw the duck that had been starved grow sleek and plump. He saw the fish disappear and he asked himself—where? The *Arabe* duck became less and less careful. He grabbed for the fishes; he went only a little distance before he gobbled them down. One day he came back before he had completely swallowed the last one. The crab saw plainly the tail still hanging between the duck's bill.

"So, that is that," said the crab. "One does not grow fat on just walking." And aloud to the *Arabe* duck he said: "I, too, have read the stars. They tell me it is time that I went to the pond. Señor, carry me there, for I shall be a hundred years walking it."

"And how shall I carry you?"

"This way. Let me put my big claw around your neck; take my little claw in your bill. In that way it will be easy."

The *Arabe* duck came close—close. He took in his bill the little claw, and lifted. Quickly the crab swung the big, the strong, the cutting claw aloft and clamped it tight around the neck of the *Arabe* duck. In a voice that bubbled softly the crab spoke. "There is more that I have read in the stars. They tell me that the fish have all gone into the very big pond of your stomach and that it is time to shut off the road leading to it. So!"

That was the end of the *Arabe* duck; and a good end, too; if you ask me or the crab or the fishes.

Picture Tales from Spain by Ruth Sawyer.

The Farmer and the Hoe

Once a farmer lived in a little house beside his cotton field. During the hot weather he often got up very early and went out into the field to hoe in the cool morning hours.

One morning when breakfast was ready, his wife went to the gate of the courtyard and called out, "Come and eat!"

The blue figure bending over the green rows of cotton straightened up. The farmer called out, "Just as soon as I hide my hoe!" He hid it under the last row of cotton, then hurried into the house.

His wife said, "Why did you call out that you were hiding your hoe? Some thief may have heard you and be waiting to steal it. Hurry back and get it."

So the farmer returned to the cotton patch for his hoe. But it was already gone.

He went back into the house, where his wife was adding coal-balls to the cooking-fire. He looked all about the room to be sure that no one was listening. Then he leaned over and whispered very softly into her left ear, "They did steal it!"

Picture Tales from the Chinese by Berta Metzger.

The Coyote and the Two Dogs

Señor Coyote had escaped from many different kinds of animals so many times that he must have begun to think that nothing on feet or wings could catch him. One day he was walking along the level valley between two mountains, when two large dogs that had been trying to catch him for a long time, sprang from behind a large stone and almost caught him before he could jump and run.

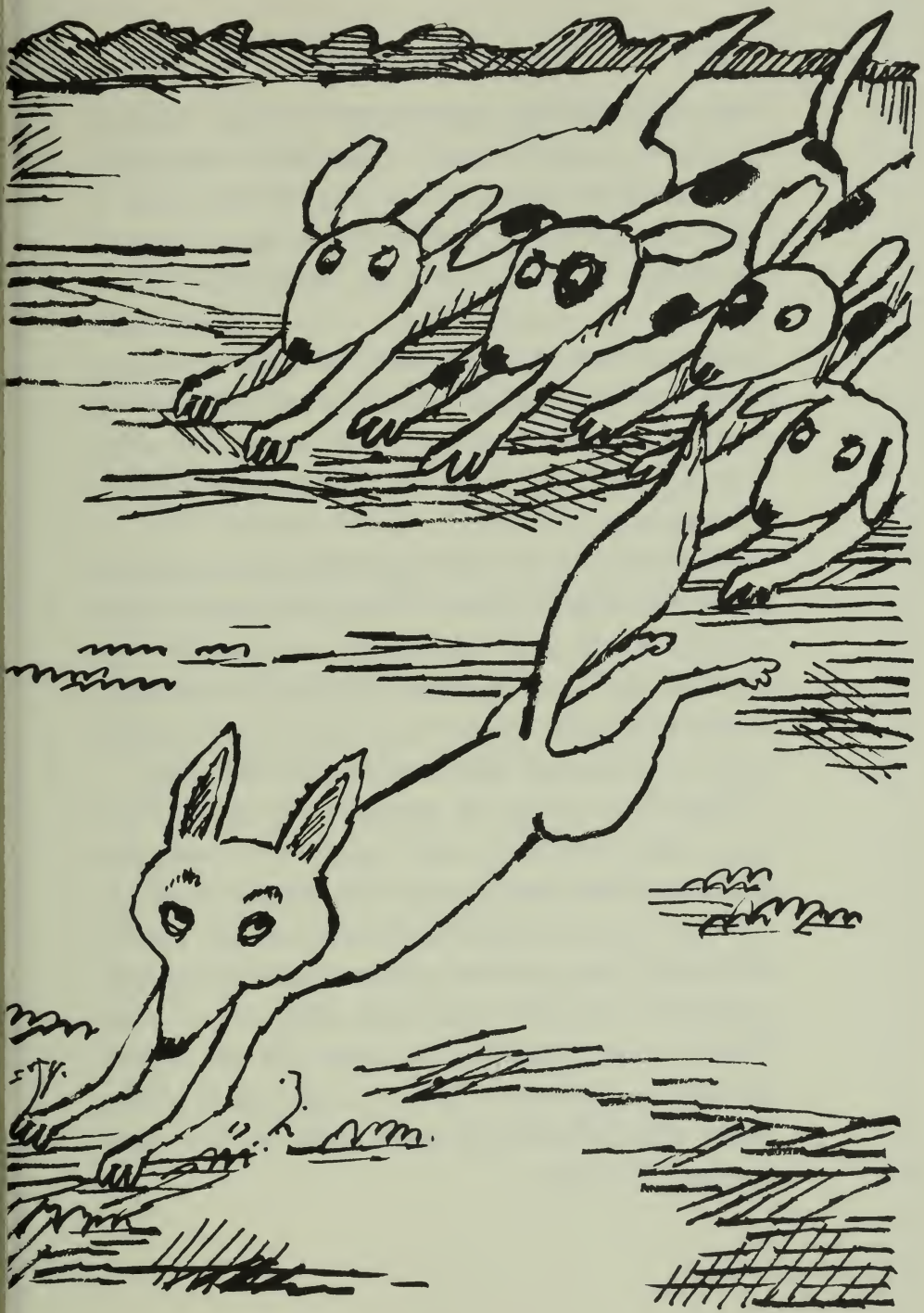
He tried to run to the woods, but the dogs had seen to it that he would have to take to the open country. As he ran around bushes and jumped over rocks and across dry arroyos, making the dust fly, he thought that he was gaining on the dogs behind. Their yelps of

"YO! YO! YO!" were getting a little fainter he thought, as he gasped for his breath and began looking around for the best direction to go.

But while he was trying to make up his mind, two other dogs large and red-and-white-spotted rose up out of nowhere and made up his mind for him. He was forced to turn back more or less toward the direction he had come. The dogs had planned to take turns racing him back and forth across the desert till he was too tired to go any further. The new pair of dogs were cutting down the distance between themselves and the Coyote in a way that made the Coyote know he must think fast and act much faster.

Upon the side of the mountain he saw something dark and round that made him take heart. He wished that it were closer. It was a cave that he saw. And now the first pair of dogs had run over slowly and were coming up somewhat rested to join their comrades in the chase.

He made a sharp turn and raced for the foot of the mountain. Behind him now came all four dogs louder and closer as he reached the mountainside and bolted up toward the cave. The dogs were so close behind him that he could



feel their breath upon him as they argued loudly as to which one of them was to get him. He saw the cave close in front of him and a new idea suddenly sent a chill of fear through his body. Was the cave big enough to allow the dogs to enter? Then what? While this cheerless thought haunted his mind, the dogs were now snapping hairs out of the end of the Coyote's tail, *clip-klop*, *snip-snap*. And with a flying dive, the Coyote sailed into the mouth of the cave.

It was lucky for him that the cave would not allow the dogs to enter. It was just barely large enough to let him in. Inside the cave he ran as far back as he could. Outside, the dogs complained and whined and pawed around the cave a while and then were heard no more.

This was easily the worst fright the Coyote ever had; but once safe inside the cave, he began to feel brave again. He began to think he was quite a fellow to be able to get rid of the dogs. As his weary limbs became rested, a desire to boast and brag stole over him. There was no one in the cave to talk to, so he began chatting with the various parts of his body which had had some part in the race against the dogs.

"*Patos*," he said, looking at his four feet one at a time, "what did you do?"

"We carried you away," said the feet. "We kicked up dust to blind the bad dogs. We jumped the rocks, and bushes and brought you here."

"*Bueno*, *bueno*," said the Coyote, "good, fine. You feet did very well." Then he spoke to his ears.

"Ears, what did you do?"

"We listened to the right and to the left. We listened behind to see how far behind the dogs were, so that Feet would know how fast to run."

"Splendid!" said the Coyote. "And, Eyes, what did you do?"

"We pointed out the road through the rocks and brush and canyons. We were on the look-out for your safety. We saw this cave."

"Marvelous!" said the Coyote with a great laugh. "What a great fellow I am to have such fine eyes, feet, and ears." And so overcome was the Coyote with his own self and the great things he had done in his life that he reached over his shoulder to pat himself on the back. And it was then that he saw his tail back there.

"Aha, my tail," he said. "I had almost forgotten about you. Come, tell me what you did in this battle with the dogs."

The tail could tell by the tone of the Coyote's voice that he did not think too highly of him and so did not answer.

"About all you did was add extra load," said the Coyote. "You held me back, more than anything else. Almost got me caught, too. You let the dogs grab the end of you. But let's hear from you. Speak up!"

"What did I do?" asked the tail. "I motioned to the dogs, like this, telling them to come on and get you. While you were running I was back there urging the dogs to come on. Through the dust they could see me in my whiteness waving." The Coyote's scowl was becoming darker and darker.

"*Silencio!*" he shouted, stuttering and stammering with anger. "What do you mean?" And he reached back and gave a slap at his tail, and then reached around and bit at it.

"You do not belong here in this cave with the rest of us, you traitor." And the Coyote was backing his tail toward the door of the cave. "Out you go," he said. "Outside! There is no room in here for you. You belong outside. You

are on the side of the dogs. You tried to help them catch me, and then you brag about it. Outside!"

And the Coyote pointed to his tail with one hand, and to the round piece of daylight which was the cave door, he pointed with the other hand. "Get Out!"

And the Coyote backed his tail out the door into the open air. The dogs, who had been listening to the talk inside, were waiting hidden outside. When the Coyote's tail appeared outside the cave door, the dogs grabbed it. Of course the Coyote was jerked out of the cave with his tail. And what the dogs did to him is another story.

Picture Tales from Mexico by Dan Storm.

Clever—Clever—Clever

Once there was a farmer who thought
he was a very clever man—and—
Once there was a bear who thought *he*
was a very clever bear—and—
Once there was a fox who thought *she*
was a very clever fox—and—
You shall soon see—
Which was the clever one of all three.

ONE DAY THE FARMER was plowing a field, making it ready to plant wheat. Oxen pulled the plow. They were too fat, too lazy. They went slower than the tortoise in summer or the toad in winter.

"*Arre*, lazy ones! Get alive both of you. I might as well have two dead oxen drawing my plow," the farmer grumbled. Then he tried

frightening them: "Go faster—go faster—or I will give one of you to the bear to eat."

Now the bear was passing nearby. He was hungry—hungry. He heard what the farmer was saying. He crossed the field and said: "Farmer—you have made a fine promise. I am here to see that you keep it. Give me one of your oxen for my dinner."

The farmer did not wish to be caught this way by the bear, who thought he was stupid compared to himself. So he said: "Yes, yes, these two lazy ones are no better than dead. I am going to give you one to eat presently; but first I must finish plowing the field. Agreed?"

"Agreed. I will take it easy while you plow." And the bear went and laid himself down under the farmer's cart. There he went fast asleep.

Soon came the fox from the woods. She crossed the field on stealthy feet. "Farmer, I saw you and the bear speaking together. I saw him go quietly and lay himself down out of the sun. I am curious. What had you to say to one another?"

"He has caught me in a bad trap. When I finish plowing I must give him one of these oxen to eat."

"I have good wits," laughed the fox. "Will you give me a fat hen to eat if I save your ox for you?"

"One hen! I will give that hen and all the chickens I have."

"Agreed. Now give me your coat and hat. With them I will pretend I am a hunter. I will hide behind the rock at the top of the field and when I put up my head and call: 'Señor Farmer!' you must answer: 'Señor Hunter, what do you want?' "

The fox put on the coat and hat. She found a stick and laid it over her shoulder like a fowling-piece. She hid behind the rock so that only the hat, the shoulders, and the stick showed. Then she called: "Señor Farmer!"

"Señor Hunter, what do you want?"

"I want to know what that is hiding under your cart. Is it something I can take a pot at?"

The bear had wakened at the shouting voices. He had heard everything. He was frightened—frightened—scared out of those fine wits of his. "Shout back to him that I am a piece of lumber," whispered the bear in a little voice.

"That is a piece of lumber," shouted the farmer.

"Señor Farmer!"

"Señor Hunter, what do you want?"

"What are you doing with the lumber?"

"Tell him you are taking it home to mend your barn with," answered the bear.

"I am taking it home to mend my barn with," shouted the farmer.

"Señor Farmer!"

"Señor Hunter, what do you want?"

"Why don't you put it in your cart, then?"

"Put me in your cart," said the bear.

The farmer tugged and pulled. He got the bear out from under the cart. He pulled and hoisted and got the bear in the cart.

"Señor Farmer!"

"Señor Hunter, what do you want?"

"In the country I come from when a person is hauling lumber in his cart he always ties it in with a strong rope."

"Tie me in," said the bear, "but not too tight."

The farmer tied him in; but not too loose.

"Señor Farmer!"

"Señor Hunter, what do you want?"

"In the country I come from they always thrust an ax well into the lumber when they are hauling it in a cart. That gives a handle

to hold to so that there will be no chance of losing it on the road home."

"Thrust an ax into me but not too far," said the bear.

The farmer came close. He took up his ax. He let it fall straight onto the head of the bear. It killed him—like that!

The fox came running from behind the rock. "What wits I have! Here is your hat and coat. Now hurry home for that hen and those chickens."

The farmer, very thankful, went fast—fast. He said to his wife: "A fox now has saved me from having to kill one of the oxen—from being eaten myself by the bear. Go and fetch the hen and the eleven chickens. I must give them to her with my *muchas gracias*."

The farmer's wife caught the hen. It was fat—fat. "It is a pity to have you eaten by nothing better than a sly fox. I will be clever and give her instead the dog and her puppies. She can eat them—if she likes."

The farmer's wife said nothing to the farmer. She filled the bag with the dog and her puppies. The farmer slung it over his shoulder and carried it to the fox. As he came close the fox shouted:

"San Juan and San Bruno,
what carry you there?
The fur of a dog
I smell in the air."

"A dog, nothing. It is the fat hen and eleven chickens—as I promised you." He slung the sack down beside the fox.

The fox laid her muzzle close and said:

"San Pedro and San Juan,
my wits tell me when
I smell stable dog
or poultry-yard hen.
And this is *not* hen."

"Not hen!" The farmer was furious. "You dare to call an honest farmer a common cheat. Me—I have stripped the poultry-yard for you. Take the sack and begone."

So surely did the farmer speak of his honesty that he convinced the fox against the better judgment of her own nose. She took the sack, slung it over her shoulder and took the road to the mountain. Safe in the fastness of some rocks she opened the sack. Out jumped the dog, full speed after the fox, who cried as she ran:

"Good measure—I see—
We have cheated—all three—
The farmer, the bear, and myself,
Ay de mi!"

At the end of the day the dog gave up the chase and the fox found her lair. She stretched herself out between her paws and looking hard at them, she said: "Poor *patitas!* You have been treated badly, this day of days. You have been bruised by stones, cut by thorns; yet you have brought me safely to cover. What shall I do for you? Sunday at the thieves' market I will buy you some little silk shoes."

"What will you buy me?" asked her ears. "I have been torn by briers."

"I will buy you a pair of lovely earrings."

"What will you buy me?" asked her tail. "I have been bitten deep by the dog as he jumped."

"I will buy you nothing," said the fox. "But I will make you a promise. From now until doomsday I will hide you between my legs whenever I am taken by surprise. Are you satisfied?"

"Well satisfied."

Picture Tales from Spain by Ruth Sawyer.

The Fox and the Cock

EARLY ONE MORNING the cock stood on a low wall, crowing loudly and feeling well pleased with himself, when a fox came by and stopped to listen.

"Dear Hans," said the fox, "what a wonderful voice you have! It is a treat to hear your musical notes."

That pleased the cock so much that he crowed again and even louder than before. Then the fox said, "Can you, by any chance, stand on one foot and crow?"

"Yes, of course, I can," answered the cock, and did so.

"Well done," said the fox. "You are certainly a clever fellow. But can you shut both your eyes and crow? That must be the most difficult of all."

"Not too difficult for me," said the cock, and

closed his eyes, but before he could crow the fox jumped up and caught him in his mouth and carried him into the wood.

When the fox had trotted all the way to his den he felt tired and stopped to rest a little. But he took good care to put his foot on the cock as soon as he laid him down.

"I am going to have a good lunch after my nap," he said to the cock.

"I suppose you will say a blessing before you eat?" said the cock. "All the fine folks fold their hands and bow their heads at mealtimes."

Of course, the fox did not want anyone, even the cock, to think that he was not used to good living, so he folded his paws and bowed his head. The cock lost no time in flying up into the nearest tree.

The fox knew quite well that the cock had played a trick on him and he scratched himself behind his ear and thought, "What shall I do now?" But he said nothing.

He ran about in the forest until he found a small chip of wood. He picked it up as if it were something very precious and carrying it carefully, he went back and sat down below the tree where the cock was sitting. The cock had been watching the fox all the time and trying

his best to find out what it was that the fox was studying so carefully. From his branch he could not see what it was, so he called down, "Dear friend, what is it that you are holding in your paws?"

"It is a letter from one of my friends," replied the fox, "but I have never learned to read and now I am sitting here and cannot make out a single word of what he has written. Won't you come down and help me out? I know you are very clever about such things!"

"No," said the cock, "I do not care to come down now."

"Why not?" asked the fox.

"I would like to help you," said the cock, "but I fear we would be disturbed by that hunter whom I see coming this way with his two dogs."

When the fox heard that a hunter was coming he jumped up and ran away as fast as he could.

As soon as he was gone, the cock came down from the tree and hurried back to the farm, and since that time if a fox ever manages to catch a cock he has to use more than flattery.

Picture Tales from Scandinavia, Selected and Retold by Ruth Bryan Owen.

Giacco and His Bean

ONCE UPON A TIME there was a little boy named Giacco who had no father or mother. The only food he had was a cup of beans. Each day he ate a bean, until finally there was only one left. So he put this bean into his pocket and walked until night. He saw a little house under a mulberry tree. Giacco knocked at the door. An old man came out and asked what he wanted.

"I have no father or mother," said Giacco. "And I have no food except this one bean."

"Poor boy," said the kind old man. He gave Giacco four mulberries to eat and let him sleep by the fire. During the night the bean rolled out of Giacco's pocket and the cat ate it up. When Giacco awoke, he cried, "Kind old man, your cat has eaten my bean. What shall I do?"

"You may take the cat," said the kind old

man. "I do no want to keep such a wicked animal."

So Giacco took the cat and walked all day, until he came to a little house under a walnut tree. He knocked at the door. An old man came out and asked what he wanted.

"I have no father or mother," said Giacco. "And I have only this cat that ate the bean."

"*Too* bad!" said the kind old man. He gave Giacco three walnuts to eat and let him sleep in the dog kennel. During the night the dog ate up the cat, and when Giacco awoke, he cried, "Kind old man, your dog has eaten my cat!"

"You may take the dog," said the kind old man. "I do not want to keep such a mean brute."

So Giacco took the dog, and walked all day until he came to a little house under a fig tree. He knocked at the door. An old man came out and asked what he wanted.

"I have no father or mother," said Giacco. "I have only this dog that ate the cat that ate the bean."

"How very sad!" said the kind old man, and gave Giacco two figs to eat and let him sleep in the pig sty.

That night the pig ate up the dog, and when

Giacco awoke he cried, "Kind old man, your pig has eaten up my dog!"

"You may take the pig," said the kind old man. "I do not care to keep such a disgusting creature."

So Giacco took the pig and walked all day until he came to a little house under a chestnut tree. He knocked at the door. An old man came out and asked what he wanted.

"I have no father or mother and only this pig that ate the dog that ate the cat that ate the bean," said Giacco.

"How pitiful!" said the kind old man, and gave Giacco one chestnut to eat and let him sleep in the stable. During the night the horse ate up the pig and when Giacco awoke he cried, "Kind old man, your horse has eaten up my pig!"

"You may take the horse," said the kind old man. "I do not want to keep such a worthless beast." So Giacco rode away on the horse.

He rode all day until he came to a castle. He knocked at the gate and a voice cried, "Who is there?"

"It is Giacco. I have no father or mother and I have only this horse that ate the pig that ate the dog that ate the cat that ate the bean."

"Ha! Ha! Ha!" laughed the Soldier. "I will tell the King."

"Ha! Ha! Ho! Ho!" laughed the King. "Whoever heard of a bean that ate the dog that ate the cat that ate the pig that ate the horse."

"Excuse me, Your Majesty, it is just the other way around," said Giacco. "It was the horse that ate the pig that ate the dog that ate the cat that ate the bean."

"Ha! Ha! Ho! Ho!" laughed the King. "My mistake! Of course it was the bean that ate the horse; no, I mean the horse that ate the bean; no I mean——Ha! Ha! Ho! Ho!" laughed the King, and the knights began to laugh, and the ladies began to laugh, and the maids began to laugh, and the cooks began to laugh, and the bells began to ring, and the birds began to sing, and all the people in the kingdom laughed and sang, and the King came to the gate and said,

"Giacco, if you will tell me every day about the bean that ate the horse; I mean the horse that ate the bean; no, I mean the horse that ate the pig that ate the dog that ate the cat that ate the bean——Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ho!

Ho! Ho! Ho! you shall sit on the throne beside me!"

So Giacco put on a golden crown and sat upon the throne, and every day he told about the horse that ate the pig that ate the dog that ate the cat that ate the bean, and everybody laughed and sang and lived happily ever after.

Picture Tales from the Italian by Florence Botsford.

The Crafty Servant

ONE DAY A SLY PEASANT decided to hire himself out as a servant in a neighboring chateau. He told the gatekeeper what he wanted and asked to speak to his master.

When the gatekeeper asked him his name, the peasant replied:

"Why do you want to know my name?"

"Because I must know the names of all the people in the castle."

"Oh, you'll recognize me without knowing my name."

"But I tell you, I must know it."

"It is really a ridiculous name, but if you insist, I'll tell it to you. I am called *Me-Myself*."

"What do you wish?" the seigneur of the chateau asked the peasant, when he was brought before him.

"I would like to enter your service, my lord."

"Very well, you are hired. Your wages will be twenty crowns a year. What is your name?"

"I hardly dare tell you, my lord; it is such a silly one."

"Come, come, my man; we have to call you something."

"Well, if your lordship pleases, my name is *Hold-Me-Back*."

The seigneur sent his new servant to the head cook for orders.

"What is your name?" the cook asked the newcomer.

"I have an awfully stupid name, but if you really want to know, it's *The Cat*."

That evening the new servant brought in the dinner. The seigneur and his family ate heartily of all the good things that had been cooked for them, but when the meal was over, the servant was sent to the kitchen and given some cold leftover rice for his supper. Of course, he was still hungry, and he lingered in the kitchen, hoping that the kitchenmaid would go to bed so that he could get for himself a better meal than the one he had just had. But the girl was suspicious and refused to leave him alone. When he pretended to fall asleep by the fire,

she went up to her master's room and knocked at the door.

"What is it?" he called.

"Master, The Cat wants to stay in the kitchen near the fire," she said.

"Well, silly girl, let him stay," the master replied sharply.

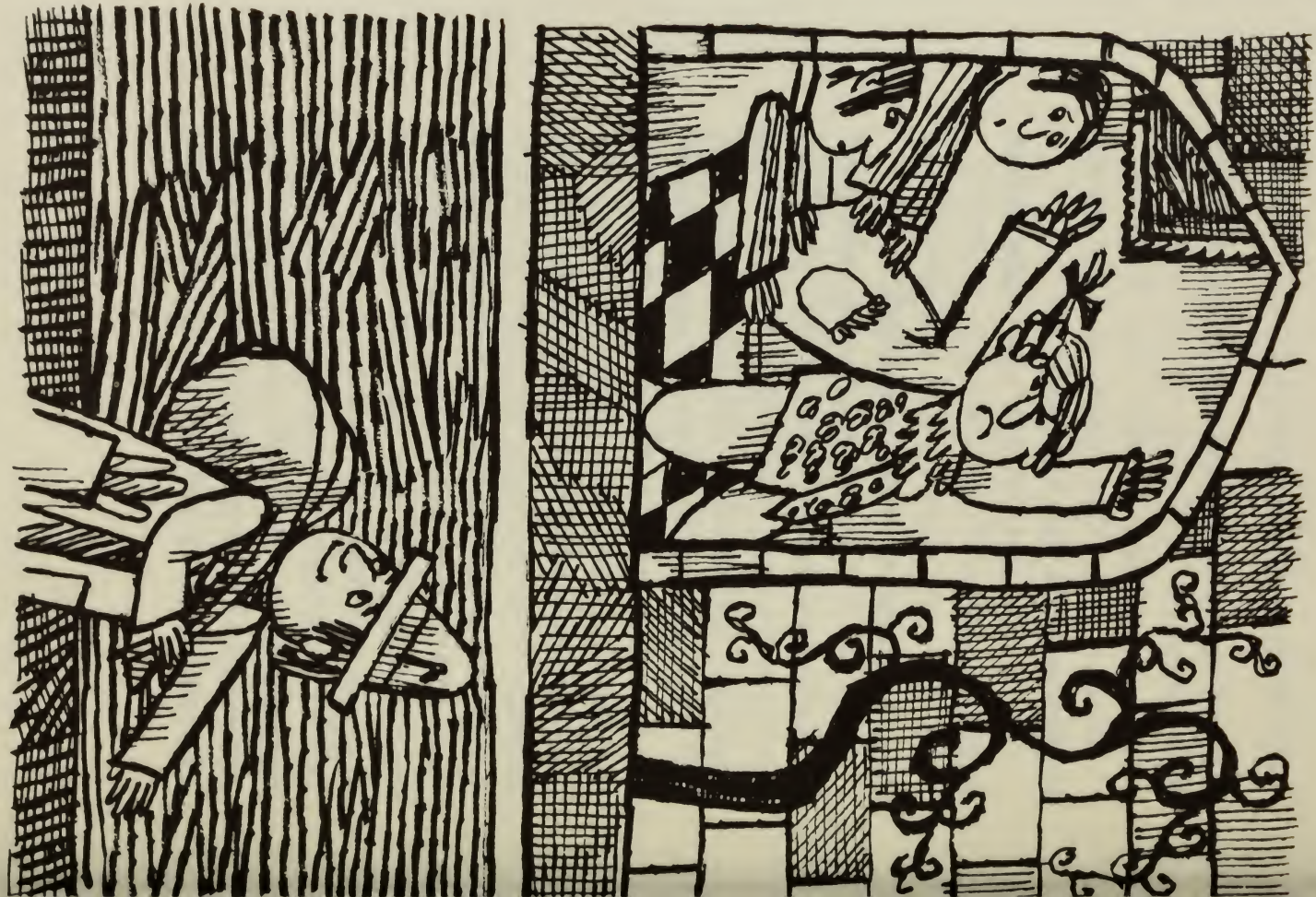
So the maid went to bed and the servant helped himself to all he could find.

Early the next morning the rogue, who knew he would be dismissed anyway, started to leave the house, taking a good supply of booty along with him. But the cook ran to his master and told him that the new servant had ransacked the kitchen. Just then the lord saw the thief running across the courtyard.

"Stop Hold-Me-Back! Hold-Me-Back!" he roared.

The servants thought their master wished them to hold *him* back, so they caught hold of his coat and held him fast. Of course that made him madder than ever.

The gatekeeper tried to prevent the culprit from getting away, but the peasant pushed him into a ditch. The master, who had finally broken away and was in hot pursuit of the hireling,



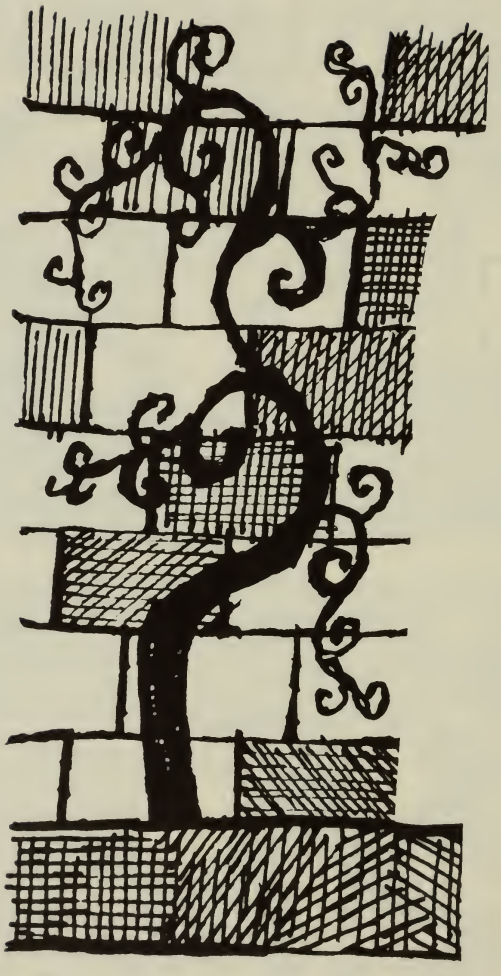
stopped long enough to ask the gatekeeper who had thrown him there.

"Me-Myself, Me-Myself," sputtered the gatekeeper.

"Then you're more of a fool than I thought you were. Instead of stopping that thief, you go and jump into a ditch!" the master bellowed.

In the meantime the peasant had disappeared, and he was never heard of again.

Picture Tales from the French by Simone Chamoud.



Donkeys! Dogs! Cats! Rats!

No one would believe that paper could make so much trouble, but it was just one piece of white paper that made donkeys hate dogs, dogs hate cats, and cats hate rats.

It began long ago when donkeys could talk as well as hee-haw. And this is the way it happened.

A nobleman lived in a castle with only one servant, named Vigio. The Count was good and generous and each day gave Vigio a purse of silver to buy food for his donkey, dog, cat, and rat. But Vigio was mean and stingy. He made the animals do all the work. The donkey reaped the harvest and carried the heavy burdens, the dog kept the house clean and the cat and rat

did the cooking and raised the vegetables in the garden.

Vigio grew very rich because he kept the purse of silver for himself and, instead of buying food for the animals, he gave the donkey two thistles every Monday, the dog one bone on Wednesday, the cat one small sardine on Friday, and the rat one grain of wheat on Saturday. And on Sunday Vigio gave all four a soup made of dried fleas.

At last the animals grew so weak and thin that they could stand it no longer. They sent the donkey to tell the Count that Vigio was starving them to death.

The Count was very angry and asked Vigio why he had not bought food with the purses of silver. Vigio only shrugged his shoulders and said:

"Noble Master, if you listen to what a donkey tells you, you will hear nothing but lies."

When Vigio had gone the donkey said, "Good Master, Vigio lies himself. You have but to look and you will see that I know everything because I have long ears; therefore what I tell you is the truth. Your dog can smell everything with his long nose, your cat can see everything with her sharp eyes, your rat can not only gnaw

through a house but she can feel everything with her fine whiskers. Where else can you find servants to serve you so faithfully by hearing, smell, sight, touch, and taste? Are we not worthy of one good meal a day from the lying Vigio?"

"What you say is true, my good donkey," said the Count. "I will write an order on this paper. Whenever you want food, present the paper to my servant Vigio and he must give you what you need."

So the donkey took the paper straight to Vigio, who then had to give him a whole measure of corn and all the sweet grass he could eat.

But like many who have all they want, the donkey forgot his starving friends, the dog, the cat, and the rat.

Now when the dog saw how easy it was for the donkey to get food, he asked to borrow the paper, and the stingy Vigio was obliged to give the dog a big piece of mutton. But as soon as the dog had plenty he forgot his friends, the cat and the rat.

When the cat saw the dog growing fat from over-eating she begged him to loan her the paper for just one meal. The mean Vigio had to give the cat a great feast of liver. But the cat ate up

the liver and forgot her poor starving friend the rat. And when the rat began to cry with hunger, the cat said with a grand air, "Take this paper and get your own food."

When the rat had eaten a whole cheese, she tore up the paper into little bits to make a soft nest, down deep in her hole.

By this time the donkey was famished and asked the dog to return the paper. The dog demanded the paper of the cat, the cat asked it of the rat and the rat told them she had used the paper to make her nest. At this the cat was so angry that she sprang at the rat and ate her all up. The dog rushed at the cat and shook her until her tail nearly dropped off, and the donkey was so furious that he pinched and snapped and kicked at the dog until they both were nearly dead.

And ever since that time, donkeys hate dogs, dogs hate cats, and cats hate rats.

Picture Tales from the Italian by Florence Botsford.

The Wise Priest

Once upon a time there was a priest so wise that all his people came to him with their troubles. Early one Sunday morning, before Mass, three farmers of his parish called upon him.

"Good morning, Monsieur le Curé," they began.

"Good morning, my friends. What can I do for you?"

"Monsieur le Curé, the drought is ruining our crops. We come to ask if you cannot find a way to make it rain."

"Why, certainly, my friends; nothing is easier. I know a prayer which will cause it to pour, but we must get everybody to agree to the same day. So at the end of today's service, I shall ask the congregation to join in the prayer."

"Thank you, Monsieur le Curé."

"I am at your service, my friends."

Satisfied, the farmers went to the church, to attend Mass. At the end of the service, the priest gathered the people and said:

"My friends, you have sent to ask my help in bringing down the rain. The drought is ruining the crops, I understand. Now, I know a prayer which will cause it to rain, but you must all agree to have it rain on the same day. Do you want it to rain today?"

"No, no, Monsieur le Curé!" the young people of the village hastily protested. "That would spoil our usual Sunday afternoon walk."

"Do you want it to rain tomorrow, then?"

"Oh, dear, no!" wailed the women. "Why, we do our washing on Monday, and certainly would not want it to rain before our clothes are dry."

"Well, then, do you wish it to rain on Tuesday?"

"Oh, no!" a group of mowers answered. "You see, we are planning to mow the grass on Wednesday, and we cannot make hay if it rains on Tuesday."

"Shall we have it rain on Thursday, then?"

"No, indeed, Monsieur le Curé!" objected the village boys. "As you know, there is no

school on Thursdays, and we want it to be dry weather so that we may play outdoors."

"Well, then, do you want it to rain Friday?"

"My, no!" cried the roof-tiler. "My tiles will be ready to bake and I cannot have it rain on the oven."

"Do you want it to rain on Saturday, then?"

"Goodness, no!" the Mayor promptly said. "I plan to go visiting in the country that day, and certainly do not want to get my feet wet."

"My friends," the priest declared, "as I told you, my prayers will not have any effect unless every one of you agrees to the same day. But as you cannot seem to agree, I think we shall have to leave the weather, as always, to the Good Lord."

Picture Tales from the French by Simone Chamoud.

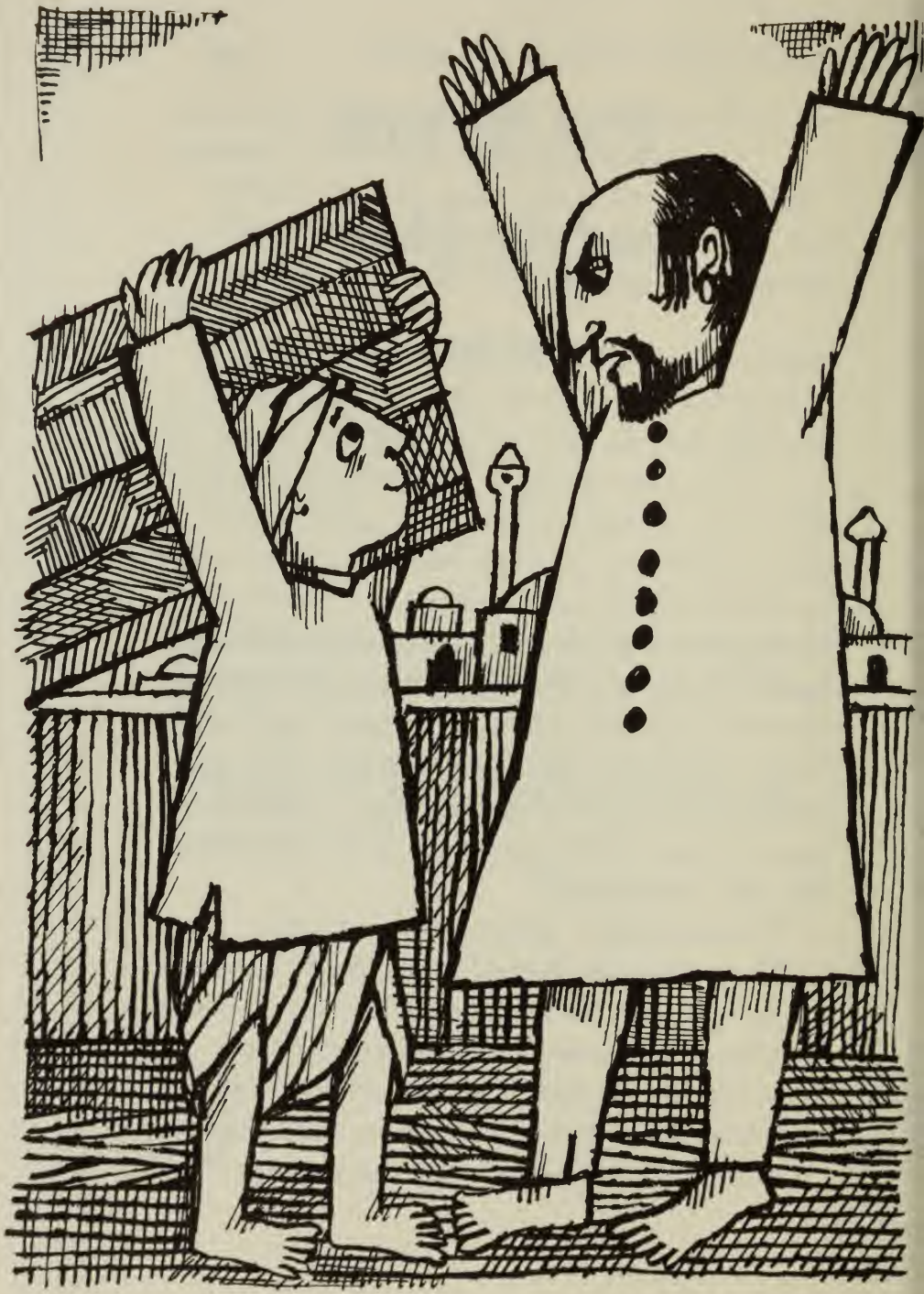
The Servant and the Door

ONCE A GOLDSMITH had a small shop filled with valuable jewelry. One day he repaired the anklets of the queen and had to take them to the king's treasurer who lived nearby. The goldsmith called his servant and said, "I have to go on an errand. Don't leave the door of the shop. Do you understand?"

"I understand," answered the servant.

The goldsmith hurried away. As he hastened back he saw in the street near his shop, a large and laughing crowd gathered around some actors. On the outskirts of the crowd was the man's servant with the door on his shoulder.

The goldsmith cried out to his servant, "You



faithless creature! I told you not to leave my shop!"

"You didn't say that, Master!" exclaimed the servant. "You told me not to leave the door."

Picture Tales from India by Berta Metzger.

The Stupid Fellow

A WOMAN ONCE TOOK CARE OF her little farm with the help of her son. "You are a good boy," she said to him, "but I am not sure that you are very clever."

On a day when his mother had finished her churning, her son said to her, "Let me take the butter to the city and sell it."

"You cannot do that," said the mother. "You have never been to the city and you do not know the way." But the boy went on begging her until she gave him some of the butter, and he started off happily on the road which led past the beech forests to a city with green copper towers.

On the way he came to a big stone. He had never seen a city, and when he saw this great thing he said to himself: "This certainly must be the city I have heard so much about," and he said to the stone: "Will you buy my butter?"

Of course, the stone made no answer. Again the boy spoke: "I am sure you would find this butter to your taste. Here, try a little of it!" and he put some of his butter on the stone.

There was a bright sun overhead which soon melted the butter. "You seem to like the butter, good city," said the boy. "All of it is just as good as the bit you have eaten. I will let you have it now and will come tomorrow for my money."

Feeling pleased to have made a sale so quickly, he put the butter on the stone and turned back toward the farm with a light heart. Of course his mother had to hear about everything that had happened. "I have sold the butter to the city and he will pay me tomorrow," said the boy. "Tell me the name of the man who bought the butter," said the mother. "Where does he live?"

"I can only tell you that I sold the butter to the city," answered the boy.

"I am afraid this only means that you have lost the butter," said the mother, "and that I have been foolish, too, to let you go off to town with it."

But the boy was in high spirits, for he was sure that he would be paid, and the next day

he made haste and traveled until he saw the great stone by the road.

"Now, good city, pay me for the butter you had yesterday," he said. The stone did not say a word. Then the boy cried in an angry voice, "You had the butter and I must have my pay. Give it to me or I will find a way to punish you." Still the stone said nothing.

"The city does not even answer me!" he said, very angry by this time. "I will not be treated so shamefully," and he began to kick and beat the stone, so that it turned over. In a hole beneath the stone, a pot of gold had been buried long ago, and when the stone rolled away it lay there shining at the boy's feet.

"It was no use for you to try to hide away your gold," the boy cried. "Here is the pay for my butter!"

His mother was surprised at the heap of coins which her son poured out on the table. "I got it from the city," he explained. "He would not pay me at first. He would not even answer me, so I turned him over and took all the money he had under him."

"What nonsense is this!" said the mother. "You could not turn over a city." But the boy

went on saying that he had turned over a city, and he had a pot of gold to prove it.

A little later, the mother butchered a pig and when the boy begged to be allowed to take some of the meat to the city to sell it, she wrapped a good portion in a napkin and put it in a basket for him. The boy went happily off, swinging the basket on his arm.

This time he did come to the gates of the city, but there a crowd of dogs stood barking at him. "How do you do!" said the boy. "Will you buy some of my meat?" The dogs barked again. "Come nearer if you are in earnest about wanting to buy," he said and opened his basket. The dogs crowded around him and ate so greedily that the meat was soon finished. "I will come tomorrow and get my pay," said the boy, and he returned home, well pleased with himself.

The next day he went back to the city gates and said to the dogs, "I have come for the money you owe me for the meat you ate yesterday." But as he had no basket on his arm the dogs ran away to find food somewhere else.

"Will you try to cheat me!" cried the boy, running after the dogs. "I will show you that you cannot do that!"

Among the dogs there was one with a fine

collar around his neck, so the boy caught that one, feeling sure that he must be the leader of them all. "You won't pay me, my good friend, but I will teach you!" and carrying the dog with him he set off to find the King and tell him how the dogs had eaten his meat and run away without paying for it.

In the castle with the green copper towers, the King held his court, but there was sadness in the castle. The King's daughter was a beautiful girl but she never laughed. She never even smiled. The King himself had almost forgotten how to laugh.

"The man who can make the Princess laugh shall marry her and be heir to my Kingdom," decreed the King.

When the boy came to the King's castle the soldier at the gate would not let him pass. "Why will you not let me enter? I have come to the King to get justice," said the boy, still carrying the dog under his arm.

"Just what do you want to ask the King?" the soldier questioned.

"I want to ask the King to help me get payment for all the meat I sold yesterday."

"In that case I will let you go in, but you must promise that you will give me half of what

the King gives you." The boy promised that the soldier should surely have half.

Soon the boy came to another sentry, and after he had told him his story he had to promise to give this soldier one-fourth of what he got from the King. "I will still have a little left!" the boy thought as he went on his way.

When he reached a third sentry he had to promise to give him the last fourth, and after he had done so he was led to the King's own room.

The King gave him permission to speak and the boy told him how he had sold the meat to the dogs and received no pay from them. "There is nothing I can do to help you," said the King. "You have given your meat to the dogs and you will have to find a way to get payment for yourself."

"Perhaps a good shaking will help," said the boy, who was angry over the whole affair, and he took the dog by his fine collar and began to shake him.

The King's daughter, who sat near her father, had heard the boy's story, and when he began shaking the dog the Princess began to laugh. When the King saw this, he said: "I promised

that the man who could make my daughter laugh could have her for a wife. Now you may claim your reward!"

"I would rather not take the Princess for my reward," said the boy.

"You won't have her," exclaimed the King. "What is it you want? Of course, I could give you money instead."

"I would rather not have money either," answered the boy.

"What!" said the King. "You do not want my daughter and you do not want money either. What can it be that you want!"

"I want sixty blows on the back," said the boy.

"If that is the reward you ask, you shall have it," said the King, "but it seems a poor sort of reward," and the King called in one of his men and told him to give the boy sixty blows on the back.

"No, stop!" said the boy. "I have to give my reward away to your soldiers. The first one at the gate made me promise to give him one-half of all you gave me, and the other two must each have one-fourth, before they would let me come into the castle."

The King ordered that the beating be given

to the sentries, and then he said to the boy, "You are not so stupid as you seem. Now I think you will have my daughter."

"Yes," said the boy. "I have now paid the soldiers and they cannot claim more than I promised them. I will indeed be glad to marry the Princess."

And he did.

Picture Tales from Scandinavia, Selected and Retold by Ruth Bryan Owen.

The Donkey in the Lion-Skin

ONCE THERE WAS a washerman who had a donkey that was very thin. In order to fatten the animal, the man used to throw a lion-skin over him and turn him loose in his neighbor's barley field, and say, "Go ahead and eat your sides fat, old Long Ears, but mind you don't give yourself away by braying."

Soon the donkey was biting off great mouthfuls of the growing grain of the hard-working neighbor while that rascal of a washerman chuckled to think how clever he was.

This trick worked for some time and the donkey got fatter and fatter. The farmer sometimes caught a glimpse of the donkey but he thought it was a lion, so he dared not go near

him. One day when the farmer was going through the barley field carrying a rug and a hoe, he caught a glimpse of the lion-skin and he was almost frightened to death. He sank down on the ground, threw the rug over himself, and crept along on all fours to get away from the fearful lion.

The donkey, seeing something creeping along with a rug over its back, thought it was another donkey in disguise, so he gave a loud, "Hee-haw! Hee-haw! Hee-haw!"

Hearing this, the man stood up, ran to the donkey, jerked off his lion-skin, and gave him a good beating with his hoe.

When the washerman heard the loud "Hee-haw! Hee-haw! Hee-haw!" he guessed that the donkey had given himself away, and when the animal came limping home, he sang out to him:

"O donkey, if you'd just been wise,
And acted brave as your disguise,
You might have still green barley eaten.
'Twas for your hee-haw you were beaten."

Picture Tales from India by Berta Metzger.

Per and the North Wind

In the far north, not very far from the home of the North Wind, a poor woman lived with her son, Per. Life was not easy for his mother but Per did all he could to help her.

One day she asked him to go to the outside storeroom and bring her some flour for her baking. Per went to the storeroom, but as he was bringing back the flour the North Wind blew a great gust and left not a grain of flour in the bowl.

Per went back to the storehouse and got another bowlful, and again the North Wind came and blew all the flour away.

When this happened over and over again,

Per saw that he must go and find the North Wind and get the flour back.

Although it was not so far, the way to the North Wind lay over high mountains and Per had a long walk before he finally got there. Then he took good care to greet the North Wind politely.

"How do you do?" said Per.

"Very well, very well, and how are you?" roared the North Wind. "And why have you come all this way to find me?"

"I have come to ask that you give me back the flour which you blew from my bowl when I was carrying it from our outside storeroom to the kitchen," Per answered. "We have only a little flour, and every time I bring it to my mother you blow some away. At this rate, we will soon have to go hungry."

"I cannot give back your flour," the North Wind said, "but I will give you something else just as good. I will give you this tablecloth, and when you want something to eat you need only say, 'Tablecloth, spread yourself and prepare a fine feast,' and you will have all the food you can eat."

Per thought this a fine exchange for the flour, and set out happily, carrying the tablecloth

under his arm. It was evening before he was halfway home, so he stopped at an inn to rest. As Per had no money he thought he would try his magic tablecloth, and laying it on the table he said, "Tablecloth, spread yourself and prepare a fine feast." The tablecloth spread itself out at once and there were dishes full of every sort of delicious food, neatly set out on the cloth.

The innkeeper watched all this with surprise. "This is just the sort of tablecloth I need here in my inn," he thought, and at once began trying to figure out a way to get it from Per.

He spoke kindly to the boy and invited him to rest over night in a comfortable room, and when it was night and everyone was sleeping, the dishonest fellow took Per's magic tablecloth and put in its place an old tablecloth from the inn, which looked very much like it but was not magic at all.

The next morning when Per awoke he took the tablecloth, thinking it was his own, and set off so that he could get home and show it to his mother without delay. She hurried to open the door when Per came in, shouting in a glad voice, "I have visited the North Wind! He welcomed me kindly and in place of the flour which he blew away he has given me a tablecloth. I

have only to say, 'Tablecloth, spread yourself and prepare a fine feast,' and the tablecloth obeys at once. We will never lack for food now!"

"I have never seen a cloth like that," said the mother. "I will believe it after I have seen it prepare a meal."

So Per put the cloth on the table and said, "Tablecloth, spread yourself and prepare a fine feast," but, of course, nothing happened.

"I cannot understand that at all," said the boy. "I must go back to the North Wind again and ask him about it."

So he went away, over the mountains and through valleys, and it was again late afternoon when he finally reached the North Wind's house.

"Good day," said Per to the North Wind. "The tablecloth you gave me does not do its work, so I have come to ask you to give me back my flour."

"I cannot give you back your flour," said the North Wind, "but here is a goat. If, when you milk her, you say, 'Dear goat, give me gold coins,' she will give you money instead of milk."

Per thought such a goat would be very useful, so he said good-bye to the North Wind and

started home, taking the goat with him. He had walked a long way that day and was tired, so when he reached the inn he went in to spend the night.

As he had no money, he thought of his goat and the coins she could give. He made haste to milk her, saying as he did so, "Dear goat, give me gold coins," and gold money came down in floods. When the innkeeper saw this he thought how useful such a goat would be to him. The more he thought of it the more he wanted it, and so in the night he got another goat that looked like Per's and exchanged it for the magic goat while the boy slept.

The next morning Per took the innkeeper's goat and went home to his mother. "The North Wind is really very good. He has given me this goat, which will give us money any time we need it. All I have to do when I milk her, is to say, 'Dear goat, give me gold coins.' "

"I think there is some nonsense about that," his mother said. "I will not believe it until I see it."

So Per began to milk the goat, but of course the goat did not give him a single coin. Then Per was really angry. "The North Wind has

given me a tablecloth which does not provide food and a goat which does not provide money. Now I will go back and tell him that he must give back our flour or we shall go hungry."

So, once more the boy went to the North Wind and asked for his flour, and the North Wind replied, "I cannot give you the flour, but I will give you the old staff which is standing in the corner. When you say to it, 'Beat, staff, beat!' it will do as you say, and it will not stop beating until you give the order."

"Well, the staff may be useful sometime," said the boy, and he thanked the North Wind and set off for home with the staff under his arm.

On his way he stopped at the same inn, but this time he had no food to eat and he remembered how his tablecloth and his goat seemed to have changed while he stopped there before. So, when Per went to bed he only pretended to sleep.

The innkeeper noticed his long staff, and remembering Per's wonderful tablecloth and the magic goat, he thought there must be something unusual about the staff, too, and he wanted to have it for himself.

As soon as he thought that Per was asleep, he brought another staff and exchanged it for Per's staff. When the innkeeper took his staff, Per, who was not asleep at all, cried out, "Beat, staff, beat!" and the staff began to beat the innkeeper soundly. The unhappy man ran around the tables and chairs trying his best to get away, but the staff followed right along, beating him at every step. "Stop, stop this staff; I will be beaten to death!" cried the innkeeper, but the staff would not stop.

Finally, when he could bear no more, the innkeeper called to Per, "Stop this staff and you shall have back your magic tablecloth and the goat that gives the gold coins."

Then Per said, "My dear staff, you may stop now," and the frightened innkeeper kept his promise at once. Per went home with his tablecloth under his arm, his goat at his side, and his staff in his hand.

When he showed his mother how the tablecloth would indeed provide them with all they could eat, and how the goat would give gold coins as long as they cared to milk it, and the staff would protect them, she said: "I see there is some truth in those stories you have been

telling me and I am willing to admit that all this is probably worth more than the flour you lost."

Picture Tales from Scandinavia, Selected and Retold by Ruth Bryan Owen.

Donkey's Eggs

THERE WAS ONCE a young peasant who did not know what a pumpkin was. One day he saw a farmer working among a field of them, and he stopped to ask what the large round yellow things were.

"Those," answered the farmer, who thought he would have a little fun at the other's expense, "are donkey's eggs."

"And do you really hatch little donkeys from them?" asked the young man seriously.

"Why, certainly, my lad," the farmer told him. "All you have to do is to keep them in a warm place for a few weeks and the baby donkey will break out of the shell by itself."

"Well, then, let me buy one from you."

He brought the pumpkin home and carefully placed it in a big box which he had filled with

moss. Then he built a good fire and drew the box to a safe corner of the hearth.

For three weeks he patiently watched over his pumpkin. The heat caused it to get very soft, of course, but the stupid fellow thought it was a good sign and expected to see the donkey's head pop out at any moment.

But at last he decided that it must have been a bad egg, and picking the pumpkin up, he threw it far over the garden wall. It fell on the ground with a splash, just where a hare had been lying peacefully in the long grass.

"Well of all things!" cried the peasant, who had caught a glimpse of the animal as it bounded away. "If I had only waited a few days I would have had a nice little donkey. This one had long ears already, but its tail still had to grow a lot."

Picture Tales from the French by Simone Chamoud.

Why Cats Always Wash After Eating

One day Minette, the puss, caught a little sparrow, of which she intended to make a meal. But as cats will do, she played with the bird for quite a while. At last she made preparations to eat it.

"Mistress Cat," said the sparrow suddenly, "I know I am in your power, but I feel I must tell you something for your own good. At the royal court the King and his courtiers never eat without washing themselves first. It simply isn't done in polite society!"

"Indeed!" answered Minette. "Well, I do not have to bow to royalty in that respect. *I* can do the same." And letting go of the little sparrow, she began to lick her paws vigorously and

passed them over her face. The moment the sparrow was free, it quickly flew to the highest branch of a nearby tree, from where it made faces at the cat and sang of the stupidity of a vain pussy.

And since that day cats have always washed themselves *after* eating.

Picture Tales from Holland by Johan Hart.

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